CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE AND NEED

EDF Renewable Energy (EDF or Applicant),[1] a wholly owned affiliate of EDF Energies Nouvelles (formerly SIIF Energies), which is a 50 percent-owned subsidiary of the EDF Group, proposes to construct and operate a 150-megawatt (MW), nominal capacity, alternating current (AC), solar photovoltaic (PV), energy-generating project known as the Desert Harvest Solar Project (DHSP or proposed project). The DHSP consists of a main generation area, operations and maintenance (O&M) facility, on-site substation, switchyard, site security, and a 220-kilovolt (kV) generation interconnection line (gen-tie line). The proposed project would be located on lands administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Palm Springs–South Coast Field Office, and portions of the project would be located on land owned by Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), the County of Riverside, California (County), and private landowners.

Because the proposed project would be located primarily on lands administered by the BLM, the Applicant filed a right-of-way (ROW) application with the BLM to construct, operate, and decommission the proposed project (Case File Number CACA #49491). The decision regarding the issuance of the ROW grant will be based in part on an evaluation of the proposed Project's potential environmental effects and measures that mitigate those effects through the environmental review process under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). As part of the ROW grant application process, the Applicant submitted a Plan of Development (POD) for the project to the BLM on December 22, 2009, followed by several revisions of the POD to supplement information provided in the original submittal in November 2010 and April 2011.

In compliance with NEPA, the BLM prepared this Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to inform the public about the Proposed Action and to meet the needs of federal, state, and local permitting agencies evaluation the project. The BLM authorization of a ROW grant for the project, either as proposed or modified, would require an amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan (BLM 1980), as amended (CDCA Plan); therefore, in connection with its evaluation of the project, this documents also presents the BLM Proposed Plan Amendments (PA) to the CDCA Plan.

The Joshua Tree National Park is north, east, and west of the proposed project; at its closest point the DHSP site is about 1.75 miles southwest of the national park. The National Park Service (NPS) is a cooperating agency for preparation of this EIS. This means that, although the NPS does not have the jurisdiction to issue any permits for the proposed project or alternatives, the BLM has requested that the NPS provide its technical expertise in the evaluation of impacts in this EIS.

The following terminology is used throughout this document.

- **"Proposed Action"** refers to the proposed project inclusive of the necessary CDCA Plan amendments to allow construction of the proposed project;
- **"proposed project"** refers to the proposed solar facility and the proposed gen-tie line;

[1] In the Draft EIS, enXco Development Corporation (enXco) was identified as the Applicant. Since the publication of the Draft EIS, enXco has changed its name to EDF Renewable Energy (EDF).

- **"DHSP"** refers to any combination of solar facility action alternative and gen-tie line action alternative that could be selected by the BLM for issuance of a ROW grant and the necessary CDCA Plan amendments;
- **"solar facility"** refers to any of the solar facility action alternatives that could be selected by the BLM for issuance of a ROW grant and the necessary CDCA Plan amendment; and
- **"gen-tie line"** refers to any of the gen-tie line action alternatives that could be selected by the BLM for issuance of a ROW grant and the necessary CDCA Plan amendment, as applicable.

The Applicant is coordinating with other federal agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), regarding potential Project approvals and any associated NEPA compliance requirements. The Applicant is also coordinating with California state and local agencies, including the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), and the County, regarding potential project approvals and any associated California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance requirements. In compliance with Section 15221 of the CEQA Guidelines, this document has been prepared to a CEQA-equivalent standard, as the County and CDFG may use this document to meet their CEQA obligations related to any permits or approval they might issue for the project. Further detail on this process is provided in Section 1.5.2.

This EIS describes and evaluates the environmental effects that are expected to result from construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of the proposed project and alternatives, and imposes mitigation measures that would avoid, minimize, or mitigate the environmental impacts identified. In accordance with NEPA and CEQA requirements, this EIS also identifies and evaluates alternatives that respond to the stated purpose and need for the proposed project (including one No Action Alternative and two No Project with Plan Amendment alternatives) that could avoid or minimize significant environmental impacts associated with the project as proposed by the Applicant, and evaluates the environmental impacts associated with these alternatives. The information contained in this EIS will be considered by the BLM in its deliberations regarding approval of the ROW grant and may also be considered by the other permitting agencies, including the County, and other federal, state, and local agencies.

1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Proposed Action consists of two main components associated with generating and delivering electricity — a solar facility and a 220-kV gen-tie line — and an associated planning decision to determine whether the proposed project application area is suitable for solar development and to allow a high-voltage transmission line outside of a federally designated utility corridor — a plan amendment as described in Section 1.2 and in detail in Chapter 2.

The solar facility site, where the power would be generated, would encompass up to 1,208 acres of BLM-managed public lands located immediately adjacent to the site of First Solar's approved Desert Sunlight Solar Farm project, for which a Final EIS was issued in April of 2011 and a Record of Decision (ROD) issued in August of 2011.

The proposed solar facility would consist of several components:

- Main Generation Area – PV arrays, switchyard, inverters, overhead lines, and access corridors;

- Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Facility;
- On-Site Substation and Switchgear; and
- Site Security, Fencing, and Lighting.

The proposed gen-tie line would transmit the electricity generated at the proposed solar facility to the regional transmission system, through the Red Bluff Substation where the power from the proposed solar facility would feed into the SCE's existing Devers Palo Verde No. 1 (DPV1) 500-kV interconnection line. The proposed gen-tie line would be 12 miles long, encompassing 256 acres of ROW. The Applicant proposes to share steel monopoles included as part of the approved but not yet constructed Desert Sunlight Solar Farm project gen-tie line. Poles are expected to be 135 feet high and approximately 900 to 1,100 feet apart.

For the solar facility and gen-tie line, the following alternative configurations are considered in this EIS:

- Four solar project configurations – Proposed Solar Project, Solar Project Excluding the Palen-Ford Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA), Reduced Footprint Solar Project, and High-Profile Reduced Footprint Solar Project;
- Four gen-tie line configurations – Proposed Gen-Tie Line (Shared Towers), Separate Transmission Towers within Same ROW, Cross-Valley Alignment, and New Cross-Valley Alignment;
- A No Action alternative; and
- Two No Project (with CDCA Plan Amendment) alternatives.

The details of the proposed project and these alternatives are described in Chapter 2.The selection of the proposed project site was based on a number of criteria, including:

- Solar insolation – The project area ranks among those with the highest insolation values in North America, with corresponding favorable projections of net capacity factor. According to preliminary figures, the global horizontal radiance for this location is 216 watts per square meter per day (W/m^2/day).
- Road and transmission access – The proposed solar facility parcel is located within an area that is readily accessible via roads and transmission ROWs.
- Distance to point of interconnect – The approved SCE Red Bluff substation is located approximately 6 miles to the south/southeast of the project boundary, and the total length of the gen-tie line would be up to 12 miles.
- Size – The solar panels and inverters would cover between 6 and 7 acres/MW.
- Environmental Considerations – Site screening took into consideration potential impacts on:
  - Surface water and groundwater;
  - Plants, including endangered, threatened, and sensitive species;
  - Terrestrial wildlife and bird populations, including endangered, threatened, and sensitive species;
  - Soils and agricultural potential;
  - Cultural heritage resources;
  - Noise;
  - Social and economic indicators; and
  - Visual resources.

BLM's pre-application process required the Applicant to perform biological resources surveys, cultural resources outreach, and other environmental due diligence prior to the BLM's accepting the ROW application as complete and ready for processing under NEPA.

1.2 BLM PURPOSE AND NEED

In accordance with FLPMA (Section 103(c)), public lands are to be managed for multiple uses and in consideration of the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and non-renewable resources. The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to grant ROWs on public lands for systems of generation, transmission, and distribution of electric energy (Section 501(a)(4)). Taking into account the BLM's multiple use mandate, the purpose and need for the Proposed Action is to respond to a FLPMA ROW application submitted by the Applicant to construct, operate, maintain, and decommission a solar energy–generating facility and associated infra-structure on public lands administered by the BLM in compliance with FLPMA, BLM ROW regulations, and other applicable federal laws and policies.

This Proposed Action would, if approved, assist the BLM in addressing the management objectives in:

- The Energy Policy Act 2005 (EPAct), Title II, Section 211, which sets forth the "sense of Congress" that the Secretary of the Interior should seek to have approved non-hydropower renewable energy projects on the public lands with a generation capacity of at least 10,000 MW by 2015
- Executive Order 13212, dated May 18, 2001, which mandates that agencies act expediently and in a manner consistent with applicable laws to increase the production and transmission of energy in a safe and environmentally sound manner.
- Secretarial Order 3285A1, dated February 22, 2010, and amended on February 22, 2010, which establishes the development of renewable energy as a priority for the Department of the Interior.

The BLM will decide whether to grant the ROW, deny the proposed ROW, or grant the ROW with modifications. The BLM may include any terms, conditions, and stipulations it determines to be in the public interest, and may include modifying the proposed use or changing the route or location of the proposed facilities (43 CFR 2805.10(a)(1)).

In connection with its decision on the DHSP, the BLM's action will also include consideration of potential amendments to the CDCA Plan, as analyzed in the Final EIS alternatives. The CDCA Plan, while recognizing the potential compatibility of solar energy facilities on public lands, requires that all sites associated with power generation or transmission not identified in that Plan be considered through the land use plan amendment process. BLM policy also encourages the avoidance of development on lands with high conflict or sensitive resource values (IM 2011-061). While the BLM is not required to formally determine whether certain high conflict lands are or are not available for solar development, if BLM decides to make that decision, it must also amend the CDCA plan. Therefore in connection with the ROW application for the proposed project, the BLM is deciding whether to amend the CDCA Plan to identify the project site as available for solar energy development or whether to amend the CDCA Plan to make the area unavailable for solar development.

Similarly, the CDCA Plan requires that transmission lines above 161 kV be placed within a federally designated utility corridor or that the transmission line be specifically allowed outside a corridor. There is no available designated corridor from the DHSP site to the Red Bluff Substation. For gen-tie action alternatives to be consistent with the CDCA Plan, the Plan requires an amendment to either allow the proposed transmission gen-tie lines outside designated utility corridors or to create a corridor. BLM is not considering creating a new corridor as a component of this project.

1.3 APPLICANT'S OBJECTIVES

The Applicant's specific objectives for the project are:

- To provide 150 MW of installed electrical capacity;
- To develop an economically feasible solar PV energy project through commercially available financing;
- To maximize operational efficiency and provide low-cost renewable energy by locating the project on contiguous lands with high solar insolation values;
- To increase local short-term and long-term employment opportunities;
- To boost local business activity during construction and operation and provide economic benefits for local businesses in Desert Center;
- To minimize environmental impacts and land disturbance by:
  - Locating the project near existing roads and transmission infrastructure;
  - Seeking to co-locate the project's gen-tie line on the transmission poles of other projects in the area as an alternative to the project's proposed stand-alone gen-tie line; and
  - Avoiding Desert Wildlife Management Areas and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.
- To assist California in meeting its 33-percent-by-2020 renewable portfolio standard (RPS);
- To assist California in meeting its AB 32 GHG emissions reduction requirements;
- To assist the BLM in addressing the management objectives in the Energy Policy Act of 2005; and
- To further the purpose of Secretarial Order 3285A1, which establishes the development of environmentally responsible renewable energy as a priority for the Department of the Interior.

CEQA Project Objectives

The Applicant's CEQA project objectives are as follows:

- To provide a reliable renewable source of power to California's IOUs and their customers by constructing and operating a cost competitive 150-MW solar facility that generates clean energy sufficient to power approximately 42,000 Californian households;
- To assist California in meeting its AB 32 GHG emissions reduction requirements and its RPS, which establishes a renewable energy target of 33 percent of total electricity sold to retail customers by 2020; and
- To minimize environmental impacts and land disturbance by:

- Locating the project near existing roads and transmission infrastructure;
- Seeking to co-locate the project's gen-tie line on the gen-tie line poles of other projects in the area as an alternative to the project's proposed stand-alone gen-tie line; and
- Avoiding Desert Wildlife Management Areas and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

1.4 GENERAL LOCATION AND MAP

The proposed project area is largely vacant, undeveloped, and fairly flat land located in the Chuckwalla Valley of the Sonora Desert in eastern Riverside County (Figure 1-1, all figures are provided in Appendix A). The area proposed for the solar facility (Figure 1-2) is approximately 6 miles north of Interstate 10 (I-10) and the rural community of Desert Center and 3 miles north of Lake Tamarisk, between the cities of Coachella (to the west) and Blythe (to the east). The general area surrounding the proposed project contains existing transmission lines, telephone lines, and pipelines, as well as dirt roads. Joshua Tree National Park is located north, east, and west of the proposed project; at its closest point, the proposed solar facility site is approximately 1.75 miles southwest of the national park boundary. The Eagle Mountain Mine is approximately 4 miles northwest of the project study area. As of the commencement of this environmental analysis in September 2011, construction of the approved Desert Sunlight Solar Farm project was underway to the north of the DHSP site, but that project is not yet completed, nor has a gen-tie line been erected for that project.

1.5 ISSUES

The issues evaluated in this EIS include the physical, biological, cultural, socioeconomic, and other resources that have the potential to be affected by activities related to the Proposed Action and alternatives. Issues may be raised by the public, other agencies, or the BLM. The issues are:

- Air Resources
- Biological Resources – Vegetation
- Biological Resources – Wildlife
- Climate Change
- Cultural Resources
- Paleontology
- Fire and Fuels Management
- Soils and Geology
- Energy and Mineral Resources
- Lands and Realty
- Noise and Vibration
- Public Health and Safety
- Recreation
- Social and Economic Setting
- Environmental Justice
- Special Designations
- Transportation and Public Access
- Visual Resources
- Water Resources;
- Solid and Hazardous Wastes
- CDCA Plan Conformance

The analysis of the environmental consequences of the solar facility and gen-tie line alternatives compares the conditions of project construction, operation, and decommissioning to the existing physical conditions in the environment at the time of the commencement of analysis, or September 2011. Therefore, the baseline is the existing physical environment as it was in September, 2011 including the Desert Sunlight Solar Farm project's solar field partially under construction and the Desert Sunlight Solar Farm project's approved gen-tie line not yet constructed. The evaluation of cumulative effects considers the combined potential effects of the DHSP and other reasonably foreseeable projects.

1.6 AGENCY ROLES AND AUTHORIZATIONS

Federal, state, and local permits and approvals would be required before construction and operation of the DHSP could proceed. A list of the major permits, approvals, and consultations required is presented in the following sections. The Applicant would be responsible for obtaining all permits and approvals required to implement any authorized activities.

1.6.1 Federal Permits and Status

Table 1-1 provides a list of the federal permits, approvals, and authorizations anticipated to be required for the Proposed Action or an action alternative, and the status of relevant permit applications.

Table 1-1. Status of Project Federal Permits, Approvals, Authorizations, and Processes

Permit or Approval	Lead Agency	Agency Action or Status
FLPMA ROW Grant	BLM	The ROW grant is subject to NEPA review and terms and conditions as set forth under FLPMA and BLM's implementing regulations. If the project is approved, BLM would offer a ROW grant in the Record of Decision at the end of the NEPA process.
CDCA Plan Amendment	BLM	BLM authorization of a ROW grant for the project will require CDCA Plan amendments as described above. The amendment will be evaluated during the FLPMA and NEPA processes as provided for in BLM Planning Regulations (43 CFR Part 1600), and BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1).
National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 Compliance	BLM	Directs Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on properties included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.
BLM Building Notice to Proceed	BLM	The BLM requirement will be specified in the Conditions of Approval pending approval of the ROW application
Federal Title V	EPA	May require Federal Operating Permit.
EPA ID No. and register as a Hazardous Waste Generator with Department of Toxic Substance Control	EPA	Takes 7-10 business days once the application form has been received. This process will be completed by the Applicant, if needed. Currently no hazardous waste is expected to be generated on-site.
Hazardous Materials Permit	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration	Required for transport of large amounts of hazardous materials on interstate highways. Currently no hazardous waste is expected to be generated on-site. The Applicant would likely contract this service with a licensed provider.
Federal Endangered Species Act, Incidental Take Permit	USFWS	As a result of ongoing consultation with USFWS under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the Applicant may be required to comply with the requirements of a Biological Opinion and/or request an Incidental Take Permit under section 7 of the Act.

1.6.2 State Permits and Status

Table 1-2 provides a list of the state permits, approvals, or authorizations anticipated to be required for the project, as well as the status of relevant permit applications.

Table 1-2. Status of Project State Permits, Approvals, and Authorizations

Permit or Approval	Lead Agency	Agency Action or Status
2080.1 Consistency Determination or 2081 Incidental Take Permit	CDFG	If the federal USFWS biological opinion provides for an incidental take permit, CDFG concurrence will also be required under Section 2080.1 of the Fish and Game Code. The Applicant may also pursue a separate incidental take permit under 2081 of the Code for state listed species not covered by CDFG 2080.1 concurrence (Gila woodpecker).
Section 1600-1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement process under the California Fish and Game Code	CDFG	Required by CDFG in the event that the state claims jurisdictional drainages within the project site
Hauling truck and other overload permits	Caltrans	California Department of Transportation requires permits for any oversized (gross weight or dimensions) vehicle deliveries. Not expected to be required at this time.
Well Drilling Permit	California Department of Water Resources, Southern District	Permit is required for drilling water wells
Trenching and excavation permit	Cal OSHA	Submit completed permit application to any OSHA district of field office prior to commencing construction
Individual Permit	RWQCB	It is anticipated that the RWQCB will take jurisdiction of the ephemeral drainages. Pre-notification will be required to obtain an individual permit.
Waste Discharge Requirements	RWQCB	Regional water quality control board may require permits
Storm water management requirements under California Water Code and the CWA	RWQCB	Construction general permit required, including a storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) that specifies best management practices (BMPs) for preventing construction pollutants from leaving the site.
Determination of Compliance	SCAQMD	An application will be submitted to the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) about the same time as the NEPA documents to obtain a determination of compliance (DOC).

The County of Riverside has discretionary authority to issue a Public Use Permit (PUP) for any gen-tie line alternative, as each gen-tie line alternative crosses private lands subject to County jurisdiction. Riverside County would also require the Applicant to obtain an encroachment permit and a franchise route agreement. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15221, the County of Riverside intends to use this EIS to provide the environmental review required for its decision regarding the approval of a gen-tie action alternative under CEQA. The County of Riverside and BLM have signed an MOU that defines the relationship of the two agencies, and identifies the County of Riverside as a Cooperating Agency with the BLM. Following preparation of the EIS by the BLM, the County of Riverside will determine whether the EIS complies with the requirements of CEQA and can, therefore, be used to support its decision with respect to the gen- tie line. As described previously, the CDFG may also use the EIS to support its permitting processes.

1.7 GUIDE TO THE FINAL EIS

This document follows regulations promulgated by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508); the Department of the Interior's NEPA regulations, 43 C.F.R. Part 46; the BLM NEPA Handbook, H-1790-1; Sections 201, 202, and 206 of FLPMA (43 C.F.R. Part 1600); and the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook, H1601-1. This EIS describes the components of and reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Action and environmental consequences of the Proposed Action and the alternatives. In addition, the document incorporates compliance with provisions of CEQA to allow Riverside County to use this EIS to satisfy its environmental review and approval processes. CEQA Responsible Agencies and other readers interested in the CEQA compliance components of this EIS are directed to the CEQA Readers' Guide, in Section 1.8.

The EIS is organized as follows:

Chapter 1 provides general background on the proposed project; identifies the purpose and need for action; and describes the roles of the BLM, other agencies, and authorities regulating various aspects of the DHSP.

Chapter 2 describes the proposed project and land use plan amendment decisions to be made and the alternatives development and screening process conducted for the project. It also presents a range of reasonable project alternatives that address the stated purpose and need for the action, and identifies and explains why some alternatives were considered but not analyzed in detail. This chapter presents a comparison of the alternatives, and describes the BLM's agency-preferred alternative and the Environmentally Superior Alternative pursuant to CEQA requirements.

Chapter 3 describes the affected environment (existing conditions) for 21 environmental resources in the project area. The existing conditions are defined as the existing physical environment as it was in September 2011 (the date of the commencement of analysis) including the Desert Sunlight solar field partially under construction and the Desert Sunlight approved gen-tie not yet constructed.

Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive analysis and assessment of impacts (direct, indirect, and cumulative) and mitigation measures (by environmental component) for the Proposed Action and alternatives analyzed in detail (including a No Action Alternative and two No Project Alternatives). It also describes other aspects of BLM compliance with NEPA procedures, including a description of unavoidable adverse impacts, the relationship between short-term use and long-term productivity, and any irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources (40 CFR 1502.16), as well as addressing CEQA requirements including identifying significant impacts and mitigation measures to reduce or minimize significant impacts, and a description of growth-inducing impacts. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable potential projects contributing to cumulative impacts are also identified and cumulative impacts are analyzed in this chapter within the section addressing each resource.

Chapter 5 identifies the persons, groups, agencies and other governmental bodies that were consulted or that contributed to the preparation of the EIS; describes Native American consultations and public participation during scoping; describes the public comment process; provides a list of EIS preparers; and lists agencies, organizations, and persons to whom the EIS has been sent.

Chapter 6 provides a list of preparers, including the BLM, Cooperating Agencies, and consultants.

Chapter 7 provides the references used in preparing the EIS.

Chapter 8 includes a glossary and list of acronyms and abbreviations used in the EIS.

Chapter 9 provides an index for key words in the EIS.

Appendix A provides all the maps and figures referenced in the body of the EIS.

Appendix B provides a scoping report summarizing public comments and identifying major issues.

Appendix C contains the following reports associated with the project: Desert Tortoise Survey Reports for 2010 and 2011, Special Status Plant Survey Report, Avian Point Count Survey Report, Botanical Survey Memo, the Biological Resources Technical Report, Draft Desert Tortoise Translocation Plan, Draft Bird and Bat Conservation Strategy, Integrated Weed Management Plan, Jurisdictional Determination and delineation report, the Applicant's memo on mitigation land, the Mojave Fringe-toed Lizard Habitat Assessment, Raven Management Plan, Worker Environmental Awareness Plan, Gen-Tie Biological Resources Technical Report Supplement, Vegetation Management Plan, Closure and Reclamation Plan, USFWS Section 7 Consultation Initiation Letter, and the Gila Woodpecker Focused Survey Report.

Appendix D contains the calculations used to derive air quality and greenhouse gas estimates for the proposed project and its alternatives.

Appendix E provides a Water Supply Assessment for the proposed project and its alternatives and a Water Quality Certification letter from the Regional Water Quality Control Board – Region 7.

Appendix F contains the calculations used to derive noise estimates for the proposed project and its alternatives.

Appendix G provides field inventory sheets, visual contrast rating data sheets for key observation points, summary tables of visual effects, and two time-lapse visual simulations.

Appendix H contains a Traffic Impact Analysis used to determine traffic impacts of the proposed project and its alternatives.

Appendix I contains a contact list for tribal groups in the project area.

Appendix J contains the signed MOU between BLM and the National Park Service.

Appendix K contains the Cabazon Band Consultation Letter.

Appendix L contains the signed MOU between BLM and the County of Riverside.

Appendix M contains the full text of comments received on the Draft EIS.

Appendix N includes responses to comments on the Draft EIS.

Appendix O includes a draft Memorandum of Agreement for Section 106 compliance.

1.8 CEQA READERS' GUIDE

Public Resources Code (P.R.C.) Section 21083.7 provides that a CEQA Lead Agency "shall, whenever possible" use an EIS as an EIR. This EIS has been prepared to a CEQA-equivalent standard pursuant to P.R.C. Section 21083.7 and Section 15221 of the CEQA Guidelines. This

CEQA readers' guide summarizes information in the EIS that has been included to ensure it is a CEQA-equivalent document. Table 1-3 shows where CEQA readers may find specific CEQA-relevant information.

When a CEQA Lead Agency intends to use a federal document in place of an EIR, Section 15225 of the CEQA Guidelines requires the Lead Agency to give notice that it will use a federal document in the place of an EIR and that it believes that the federal document meets the requirements of CEQA. In addition to providing such notice, the County of Riverside intends to certify this EIS as a CEQA-equivalent document pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15090 and make the findings and statement of overriding considerations required under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15091 and 15093, respectively. Mitigation measures recommended in the EIS and a mitigation monitoring program would be required to be adopted when the County certifies the EIS (P.R.C., Section 21081.6), or findings of infeasibility made. Additional detail is provided in Section 1.5.2 (State Permits and Status).

Table 1-3. Summary of CEQA Readers' Guide

CEQA-Relevant Information	Section in the Final EIS
Environmentally Superior Alternative	Chapter 2 – Section 2.15
Mitigation Measures	Chapter 4 – Summary of Impacts section under Mitigation Measures for each relevant issue area
Impact Significance Determinations	Chapter 4 – CEQA Significance Determination section under CEQA Considerations for each issue area
Cumulative Impacts (CEQA-specific)	Chapter 4 – CEQA Significance Determination section for each issue area
Growth-Inducting Effects	Chapter 4 – Subsection F-1 of Section 4.17 (Social and Economic Effects)
Energy Conservation (CEQA Appendix F)	Chapter 4 – Section 4.10.14
Public Consultation and Notice	Chapter 5 (Consultation, Coordination, and Public Participation)

Alternatives and Project Objectives

The CEQA Guidelines require consideration of the No Project Alternative (Section 15126.6(e)) and selection of a range of reasonable alternatives (Section 15126.6(c)). CEQA also requires the identification of the environmentally superior alternative (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(d) and (e)(2)). Chapter 2 of the EIS describes a No Action Alternative (Section 2.2) and two No Project Alternatives (Sections 2.3 and 2.4). The environmentally superior alternative is discussed in Section 2.16, and the Applicant's CEQA objectives are listed in Section 1.3. Under CEQA, alternatives should reduce environmental impacts and are required to meet most, but not necessarily all, of the project objectives.

Mitigation Measures

CEQA requires the adoption of all feasible mitigation measures in order to reduce "significant" impacts as defined in CEQA (CEQA Guidelines Section 15092(b), 15043)). Feasible mitigation measures are included for each potentially significant impact as required by Section 15126.2(e) of the CEQA Guidelines. These measures are listed in the summaries of impacts for each relevant issue area in Chapter 4. Because the County of Riverside intends to use this EIS in issuing permits, these mitigation measures and a mitigation monitoring plan (CEQA Guidelines

Section 15097) will be adopted when the County certifies the EIS. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan is included as Appendix J of this Final EIS.

Significance Determinations

CEQA requires specific disclosure of the "significance" of each potential impact. There is no requirement that federal agencies determine "significance" when analyzing each impact in an EIS, and the term "significant" has a different meaning in NEPA.

Each resource analysis in Chapter 4 has a section entitled "CEQA Considerations." These sections include: (1) the relevant significance criteria from the CEQA Environmental Checklist, Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines; and (2) a CEQA significance determination (and rationale) for each significance criterion. Impact significance is assessed for construction, operation, and decommissioning of each of the relevant alternatives, including the proposed project.

Cumulative

Discussions of CEQA considerations in Chapter 4 also include an assessment of whether the alternatives would represent a considerable contribution to cumulative impacts. This analysis is included in compliance with Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines. As appropriate, this analysis includes feasible options for mitigating cumulative impacts in accordance with Section 15130(b)(5). Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable potential projects contributing to cumulative impacts are identified in Section 4.1.4 (Introduction and Overview, Cumulative Scenario Approach).

Other CEQA-Relevant Sections

There are several other CEQA-specific requirements that are addressed in this EIS:

- **Growth-inducing effects** are addressed in Section 4.17.14 (Social and Economic Effects, CEQA Considerations) in compliance with Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines.
- **Energy conservation** is addressed in Section 4.10.14 (Energy and Mineral Resources, Energy Conservation) in compliance with CEQA Appendix F.

Public Consultation and Public Notice

Public consultation and notice are addressed generally in Chapter 5. A Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare the EIS was published in the Federal Register on September 15, 2011 and was received by the State Clearinghouse on September 29, 2011. The project was assigned State Clearinghouse #2011094004. The NOI was prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15082; that is, the NOI contained sufficient information to allow Responsible and Trustee agencies and the Office of Planning and Research to make a meaningful response. The NOI was circulated to the following state agencies: Department of Conservation; California Energy Commission; California Highway Patrol; Native American Heritage Commission; Department of Parks and Recreation; Public Utilities Commission; Resources Agency; State Lands Commission; Resources, Recycling and Recovery; Department of Water Resources; Caltrans, District 8; Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 7; Department of Toxic Substances Control; Department of Fish and Game, Region 6. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other federal agencies also received the NOI.

The federal scoping period was September 15, 2011 to October 17, 2011. The review period listed by the State Clearinghouse was September 29, 2011 through October 28, 2011, and scop-

ing comments were accepted through this date. Therefore, the scoping comment period lasted more than 30 days, which is the duration required for review of a notice of preparation of an EIR under CEQA Guidelines Section 15082. Notification for public Scoping Meetings was posted on the BLM's website. In addition, notices were sent to Responsible and Trustee Agencies under CEQA, all landowners within 300 feet of the project boundary, and other interested parties. Two public scoping meetings were held on October 3, 2011 and one was held on October 6, 2011.

A notice of the availability of the Draft EIS was published in compliance with the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Sections 15225 and 15087, including publishing in a newspaper of general circulation in the area potentially affected by the project. In addition, the Draft EIS has been filed with the Riverside County Clerk and the State Clearinghouse, and the notice will be posted in the office of the County Clerk for 30 days. The Draft EIS was made available for public review for 90 days, as provided under P.R.C. Section 21091, and public notice of that fact has been given pursuant to Section 21092.

As the CEQA Lead Agency, it is anticipated that the County will certify the Final EIS as being in compliance with CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15090. Prior to reaching a decision approving the proposed project or an alternative, the County will be required to make findings pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 and adopt a statement of overriding considerations pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15093. Within 5 working days of deciding to approve the proposed project or an alternative, should this be the course of action the County chooses, the County will be required to file a notice of determination pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15094.

1.9 POLICY CONSISTENCY AND LAND PLAN CONFORMANCE

1.9.1 Relationship of the Proposed Action to BLM Policies, Plans, and Programs

This section summarizes the BLM policies, plans, and programs that apply to the Proposed Action and alternatives.

Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. FLPMA provides the BLM's overarching mandate to manage the lands and resources under its stewardship based on the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. Multiple use is a concept that directs management of lands and resource values in a way that best meets the present and future needs of Americans. It is defined as "a combination of balanced and diverse resource uses that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources" (FLPMA §103[c]). In processing a land use plan amendment, BLM must also comply with the BLM Planning Regulations (43 CFR Part 1600) and the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1). Project compliance with the multiple use class requirements is discussed in Chapter 4.13, Lands and Realty.

California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan 1980, as amended (CDCA Plan). The CDCA encompasses 25 million acres in southern California designated by Congress in 1976 through FLPMA. The BLM manages about 10 million of those acres. Congress directed the BLM to prepare and implement a comprehensive long-range plan for the management, use, development, and protection of public lands within the CDCA. The CDCA Plan, as amended, is based on the concepts of multiple use, sustained yield, and maintenance of environmental quality.

The CDCA Plan provides overall regional guidance for BLM-administered lands in the CDCA and establishes long-term goals for protection and use of the California desert.

The CDCA Plan establishes four multiple use classes, multiple use class guidelines, and plan elements for specific resources or activities, such as motorized vehicle access, recreation, and vegetation. Project compliance with the multiple use classes is discussed in Section 4.13, Lands and Realty. The multiple use classes are:

- **Class C (Controlled Use) –** About 2 million acres are Class C. These include 69 wilderness areas (3,667,020 acres) created by Congress with the October 1994 passage of the California Desert Protection Act. These lands are to be preserved in a natural state; access generally is limited to non-motorized, non-mechanized means—on foot or horseback.
- **Class L (Limited Use)** – About 2 million acres are Class L. These lands are managed to protect sensitive, natural, scenic, ecological, and cultural resource values. They provide for generally lower-intensity, carefully controlled multiple uses that do not significantly diminish resource values.
- **Class M (Moderate Use)** – About 1.5 million acres are Class M. These lands are managed in a controlled balance between higher-intensity use and protection. A wide variety of uses such as mining, livestock grazing, recreation, energy, and utility development are allowed. Any damage that permitted uses cause must be mitigated.
- **Class I (Intensive Use)** – About 500,000 acres are Class I. These lands are managed for concentrated use to meet human needs. Reasonable protection is provided for sensitive natural values and mitigation of impacts, and impacted areas are rehabilitated when possible.

The proposed solar facility as well as most of the proposed gen-tie line would be located on land designated by BLM Class M (Moderate Use). A portion of the gen-tie line Alternative E would cross areas designated as Class L (Limited Use) and all gen-tie line alternatives would cross a very small area of land designated as Class L upon entry into the Red Bluff Substation.

Programmatic Final Environmental Impact Statement for Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicide. The BLM's 2007 *Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicide Programmatic Final Environmental Impact Statement* (Herbicide PFEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) outline allowable methods, chemicals, and application rates for herbicide use on BLM lands in 17 western states. Appendix B, Herbicide Treatment Standard Operating Procedures, of the Herbicide PFEIS, specifically outlines management strategies for noxious weeds and application of herbicides on BLM land. Table B-1, Prevention Measures, specifies avoidance measures to limit noxious weed infestation, and Table B-2, Standard Operating Procedures for Applying Herbicides, provides additional details related to herbicide application. The Herbicide PFEIS also compares and analyzes the impacts of various herbicide treatments, including cumulative impacts. This DHSP EIS addresses weed management strategies, including herbicide use, which would be required for invasive plant management in accordance with the Integrated Weed Management Plan for the DHSP in Appendix C.10. Analysis of herbicide use in the DHSP EIS is tiered to BLM's Herbicide PFEIS and ROD from September 2007. The whole Herbicide PFEIS and ROD are incorporated by reference in accordance with CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 CCR §15150) and NEPA (40 CFR § 1502.21). The Herbicide PFEIS and ROD are available for review at the BLM Palm Springs Field Office and online: http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/veg_eis.html

1.9.2 Relationship to Other Federal Plans, Policies, Programs, and Laws

This section summarizes the other major federal plans, policies, programs, and laws that apply to the Proposed Action.

NEPA and CEQ Guidelines for Implementing NEPA

NEPA (42 USC. 4321 et seq.) declares a continuing federal policy that directs "a systematic, interdisciplinary approach" to planning and decision-making and requires the preparation of EISs for "major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment." The CEQ Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) require federal agencies to identify and assess reasonable alternatives to proposed actions that will restore and enhance the quality of the human environment and avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. Federal agencies are further directed to emphasize significant environmental issues in project planning and to integrate impact studies required by other environmental laws and Executive Orders into the NEPA process. The NEPA process should therefore be seen as an overall framework for the environmental evaluation of federal actions. In processing ROW applications, BLM must also comply with the Department of the Interior's regulations applicable to implementing the procedural requirements of NEPA (43 CFR Part 46), as well as BLM's NEPA Handbook (H-1790-1).

Clean Air Act

The Clean Air Act (42 USC 7401-7661), as amended, regulates air pollution to improve air quality. It regulates air emissions from area, stationary, and mobile sources. This law also authorizes the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to establish National Ambient Air Quality Standards to protect public health and the environment.

Endangered Species Act of 1973

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) (16 USC 1531-1543) and subsequent amendments provide guidance for the conservation of endangered and threatened species and the ecosystems upon which they depend. The USFWS administers the ESA. The major components of the ESA are:

- Provisions for the listing of threatened and endangered species;
- The requirement for consultation with the USFWS on federal projects that may affect listed species or their habitat;
- Prohibitions against "take" of listed species. Under the ESA, the definition of "take" is to "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct"; and
- Provisions for permits to allow the incidental take of threatened and endangered species.

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940 (BGEPA) (16 USC, 668, enacted by 54 Stat. 250) protects bald and golden eagles by prohibiting the taking, possession, and commerce of such birds and establishes civil penalties for violation of this act. Under BGEPA, take includes "disturb," which means "to agitate or bother a bald eagle or a golden eagle to a degree that causes, or is likely to cause, based on the best scientific information available, (1) injury to an eagle, (2)

a decrease in its productivity, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior, or (3) nest abandonment, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior."

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as Amended

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (16 USC 470) requires federal agencies with jurisdiction over a proposed federal project to take into account the effect of the undertaking on cultural resources that are listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The act requires that the agencies afford the State Historic Preservation Office, any potentially affected Indian tribe, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation with an opportunity to comment on the undertaking.

Federal Power Act

Under section 24 of the Federal Power Act, the following actions result in a withdrawal of public land: the filing of an application for (or issuance of) a preliminary permit with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the filing of an application for a license (with FERC) and the issuance of a license by FERC. A withdrawal created under the Federal Power Act on BLM-managed land reserves the public land for use by a pending power project, and BLM recognizes that the licensee has a priority right to use the withdrawn lands. BLM has the authority to authorize ROW on the withdrawn land, but any ROW cannot infringe on the licensee's priority right to use the land. A Federal Energy Regulation Commission (FERC) withdrawal area for the proposed Eagle Mountain Pumped Storage Project overlaps the south-western parcel of Alternative 4. Project compliance with the Federal Power Act is discussed in Sections 3.11 and 4.11.

1916 Organic Act, as Amended

The Secretary of the Interior is responsible for protecting units of the National Park System pursuant to the National Park Service 1916 Organic Act (16 U.S.C. 1, 2, 3 and 4) which consists of the Act of August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535) and amendments thereto.

Energy Policy Act 2005

Title II, Section 211 of this act sets forth the "sense of Congress" that the Secretary of the Interior should seek to have approved non-hydropower renewable energy projects on the public lands with a generation capacity of at least 10,000 MW by 2015.

Executive Order 13212

Mandates that agencies act expediently and in a manner consistent with applicable laws to increase the production and transmission of energy in a safe and environmentally sound manner.

Secretarial Order 3285A1

Establishes the development of renewable energy as a priority for the Department of the Interior.

1.10 OTHER APPLICABLE PLANS AND PROGRAMS

This section summarizes the major state and local laws, plans, policies, and programs that apply to the Proposed Action and alternatives.

California Renewable Portfolio Standard

In 2002, the California Legislature enacted a statute establishing its RPS program, with the goal of increasing the percentage of renewable energy in the State's electricity mix to 20 percent by 2017.[2] State energy agencies recommended accelerating that goal in their 2003 Energy Action Plan. Those recommendations resulted in changes in the law. In 2006, Senate Bill 107 (Simitian and Perata 2006) modified the RPS to require the "investor-owned utilities" to procure 20 percent of retail sales from renewable energy by 2010. In November 2008, the Governor signed Executive Order S-14-08 to require all retail sellers of electricity in California serve 33 percent of their load with renewable energy by 2020.

The Renewable Electricity Standard (RES), which implemented the 33 percent RPS requirement statewide, was adopted by the California Air Resources Board in September 2010, as required by Executive Order S-21-09 (17 CCR Sections 97000 to 97012). However, the RES regulations were preempted by legislative action in April 2011, as described below.

California Renewable Energy Resources Act of 2011 (SB X1-2)

In April 2011, Senate Bill 2 of the 1st Extraordinary Session (SB X1-2) was signed into law. SB X1-2 expressly applies the new 33 percent RPS by December 31, 2020 to all retail sellers. It also established standards for interim years of: an average of 20 percent from 2011 through 2013, a minimum of 20 percent thereafter through 2016, and a minimum of 25 percent by December 31, 2016. This codified the requirement to achieve 33 percent RPS statewide by the end of 2020, a key element of the 2008 AB 32 Scoping Plan (CARB 2008).

Riverside County General Plan (2003)

Portions of the proposed interconnection lines are within Riverside County's Desert Center Planning Area. The Riverside General Plan aims to preserve the natural character of the unincorporated areas of Riverside County and the Desert Center. The plan encourages clustering of development for the preservation of contiguous open space, aims to limit off-road vehicle use, and requires new development to comply with desert tortoise critical habitat designation requirements.

Air Quality Management District

The proposed project locations are within the jurisdiction of the SCAQMD, which reviews the plans and specifications for construction in the proposed project area. SCAQMD would assess emissions and possible air contamination resulting from construction and operational activities (e.g., road dust, windblown contaminants, and emissions from construction activities).

California Endangered Species Act

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Fish and Game Code 2050 et seq.) establishes the policy of the state to conserve, protect, restore, and enhance threatened or endangered species and their habitats. CESA mandates that state agencies should not approve projects that would jeopardize the continued existence of threatened or endangered species if reasonable and prudent

[2] To qualify as eligible for California's RPS, a generation facility must use a designated renewable resource or fuel, as in the Overall Renewable Energy Program Guidebook (CEC Publication # CEC-300-2007-003-ED2-CMF, adopted December 19, 2007).

alternatives are available that would avoid jeopardy. There are no state agency consultation procedures under CESA. For projects that affect a species that is both state and federally listed, compliance with the federal ESA will satisfy CESA if the CDFG determines that the federal incidental take authorization is "consistent" with CESA under Fish and Game Code Section 2080.1 and issues a Consistency Determination to that effect. For projects that will result in a take of a state-only listed species, the applicant must apply for a take permit under Section 2081(b).

California Fish and Game Code, Streambed Alteration Agreements

Sections 1601 to 1603 of the California Fish and Game Code require notifying CDFG prior to constructing any project that would divert, obstruct or change the natural flow, bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake. Preliminary notification and project review generally occur during the environmental review process. When an existing fish or wildlife resource may be substantially adversely affected, CDFG is required to propose reasonable project changes and/or mitigation to protect the resource. These modifications are formalized in a Streambed Alteration Agreement that becomes part of the plans, specifications, and bid documents for the project.

State Historic Preservation Office Review

The California SHPO reviews and comments on potentially impacted historic resources under federal jurisdiction identified as part of the NHPA process for the project.

California Generator Interconnection Process

Electricity from the project would be delivered to customers by the California Independent System Operator Corporation (CAISO), acting as a transmission provider, through the transmission system owned by SCE and Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E). In order to obtain the right to connect to the CAISO grid, a proposed electric generating facility with more than a 20-MW capacity must first apply for a queue position with CAISO through the Generator Interconnection Procedures (GIP) process. An application for the project's queue position was submitted in July 2010, obtaining position 643AE. Next, the proposed generator must obtain a Feasibility Study, a System Impact Study, and a Facility Study from CAISO. Finally, the proposed generator must execute a Generator Interconnection Agreement with CAISO.

1.11 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

The Desert Sunlight Solar Farm (DSSF) Final EIS is incorporated into this document by reference. The DSSF Final EIS, prepared by BLM with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) as the CEQA lead agency, analyzes the impacts of the DSSF project, which was proposed by First Solar on a site directly north of the proposed DHSP. The EIS was prepared to a CEQA-equivalent standard under Section 15221 of the CEQA Guidelines. Joshua Tree National Park is north, east, and west of the DSSF site; at its closest point, the DSSF site is approximately 1.4 miles southwest of the national park boundary. The DSSF Final EIS evaluates the environmental effects of the 550 MW photovoltaic (PV) solar field constructed on 4.5- to 8-feet high, fixed-tilt panels on approximately 4,000 acres of BLM-managed public land. The Southern California Edison (SCE)-proposed 500/220-kV Red Bluff Substation was also considered a connected action to the DSSF project, and was analyzed in the DSSF Final EIS. The DSSF Final EIS also analyzes a gen-tie line going from the project site to the Red Bluff Substation. The DSSF Final EIS analyzes alternatives for the solar facility, gen-tie line, and Red

Bluff Substation based on their environmental impacts under NEPA (and pursuant to CEQA, under a CEQA-equivalent review process) during construction (26 months), operation and maintenance (30 years), and decommissioning. Cumulative impacts with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects and actions were also considered. An amendment to the CDCA Plan allowing the use of the site for solar energy generation was also considered in the EIS. The DSSF Final EIS provides responses to public comments received by the BLM on the project during a 90-day public review period.

The DSSF Final EIS analyzed 3 action alternatives (which incorporate different combinations of 2 solar field alternatives, 3 gen-tie alternatives, 2 substation alternatives, and 2 substation access road alternatives) and 3 no-action alternatives. Biological, cultural, paleontological, geotechnical, and geoarchaeological studies were conducted for the project area, which, in some cases, included all or part of the DHSP solar facility site. Biological surveys were also conducted for portions of all gen-tie alternatives considered in the DSSF Final EIS, including the selected alternative, which is equivalent to gen-tie Alternative B considered in this EIS. These surveys, conducted for botanical and wildlife species in 2010, found the presence of some sensitive species, including Emory's crucifixion thorn and desert tortoise. Cultural surveys were conducted on portions of the area covered by DHSP Alternatives B, C, and D. Paleontological sensitivity studies were conducted on portions of DHSP Alternatives B and C. A hazardous materials storage and contaminated sites database search, traffic study, and environmental justice analysis were also conducted for the project area. The project also completed a jurisdictional delineation for waters on the project site, concluding that there were no waters of the U.S. on site. The project's emissions and noise levels were estimated for construction and O&M, and groundwater requirements were also estimated.

First Solar also provided a report entitled "Gen-Tie Undergrounding Report; Desert Sunlight Solar Farm Project," which analyzed the costs associated with undergrounding the transmission line for that project. BLM evaluated the information included in First Solar's report and determined that, based on the BLM's own experience, expertise, and research, constructing the DSSF gen-tie line underground would not be feasible.

Applicant measures and mitigation measures were developed to reduce the impacts of the DSSF project to the extent feasible. Conservation measures identified in the USFWS Biological Opinion, such as maintaining desert tortoise habitat connectivity and acquiring compensation lands, were adopted in the DSSF ROD. A cultural mitigation measure required development of a Memorandum of Agreement under Section 106 for resolution of effects on historic and cultural resources (the MOA is included as Appendix 4 of the DSSF Record of Decision). The DSSF Final EIS determined that even with mitigation measures, the impacts on air resources, cultural resources, and visual resources could not be reduced to less-than-significant levels under CEQA and would be unavoidable. The CPUC determined under CEQA that the environmentally superior alternative would combine either alternative solar farm layout with the eastern substation alternative (Substation A, Access Road 2), and Gen-Tie Alternative A-2, which utilizes SCE right-of-way to go from the solar facility site to Substation A. BLM's preferred alternative combined Solar Farm layout B (full footprint) with Gen-Tie Line A-1 (the same as DHSP's Alternative B), and Substation A with Access Road 2.

The DSSF EIS is publicly accessible at the Palm Springs – South Coast Field Office or online: http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings/Solar_Projects/Desert_Sunlight.html.